

Energy Division Trains Idaho Builders

By Linda Cawley, IDWR Information Specialist

You're thinking about buying or building a new home, and you've read or heard a little about homes that are more energy efficient than the average home. Just what does that mean, and how do builders learn to make those homes more energy efficient?

Homes that earn the Energy Star certification must meet guidelines for energy efficiency set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. These qualified homes are at least 30 percent more energy efficient than homes built to the 2004 International Residential Code.

Energy Star qualified homes can include a variety of energy-efficient features, such as effective insulation, high performance windows, tight construction and ducts, efficient heating and cooling equipment, and Energy Star qualified lighting and appliances.

These features contribute to improved home quality and homeowner comfort, and to lower energy demand and reduced air pollution. Energy Star also encourages the use of energy-efficient lights and appliances, as well as features designed to improve indoor air quality.

Every year the Energy Division, along with several co-sponsors, conducts a series of training workshops for builders who are interested in constructing Energy Star homes. Co-sponsors include Idaho Power Company, Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

This year's annual Idaho Builder Energy Conference in March will bring these builders together to hear some of the leading industry professionals discuss the most recent information on insulation, air conditioners and heat pumps. The latest research in airflow design in energy-efficient homes will also be featured.

This year's theme is "Sustainable Homes for a Sustainable Future." The two-day conference will feature several speakers, including Dr. Joe Lstiburek, one of the world's foremost authorities on energy-efficient construction techniques.

"More people are seeing the advantages of owning an energy-efficient home constructed by trained and certified builders," says Doug Plourde, energy specialist and Idaho Energy Star program manager.

"Several Energy Division programs are designed to provide technical assistance to builders, remodelers and home owners throughout Idaho. Without these training programs, people would have to travel out of state to obtain certified training at a much greater expense," says Plourde.

For more information on builder training programs, call the Idaho Energy Hotline, 1-800-334-SAVE, or contact Doug Plourde at 208-287-4903 or by email at doug.plourde@idwr.idaho.gov. Additional information is also available on the Energy Division's website at www.idwr.idaho.gov/energy.

-end-